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Daily Highlights

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Over one hundred and fifty Heads of State and Government are expected in New York this weekend for special commemorative session of the United Nations.

* There are alarming reports of human rights abuses against non-Serbs from the Banja Luka area, in northern Bosnia-Herzegovina.

* Secretary-General and Israeli Prime Minister discuss situation in Middle East.

* Queen of Jordan and Secretary-General formally launch International Leadership Academy of the United Nations University.

* Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management says financial situation of United Nations continues to be extremely grave.

* United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNESCO Director-General agree to intensify cooperation to protect and promote human rights.

* Developing countries seek action-oriented Agenda for development providing framework for implementing existing international commitments for development, representative of the Philippines tells Economic and Financial Committee.

* Capability of developing countries to combat crime is seriously hampered by lack of financial resources and technology, Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee is told.

* Department of Public Information publishes fact sheet: "Setting the Record Straight".

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More than one hundred and fifty Heads of State and Government are expected in New York this weekend for the special commemorative session of the United Nations. The occasion marks the 50th anniversary of the Organization.

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When the United Nations was established in 1945, it had 50 members; today there are 185 member states. The special commemorative session begins Sunday with the first speaker being the President of the United States Bill Clinton.

Among other speakers on Sunday will be President Yeltsin of the Russian Federation, King Hussein of Jordan, President Nujoma of Namibia, President Castro of Cuba, Prime Minister Brundtland of Norway, Prime Minister Murayama of Japan and Chairman Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

A grand total of 204 speakers representing all member states and 19 Observers will take the floor during the three days culminating on the actual 50th anniversary - 24 October. Many member states have drawn up special programmes to observe the anniversary.

There will be a special edition of the Daily Highlights on Sunday. The United Nations News Audio Information System will be continually updated during the three days of the special session, and will carry special items.

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Alarming reports continue to come in of human rights abuses against non-Serbs being evicted from the Banja Luka area, in northern Bosnia-Herzegovina. According to a United Nations spokesman, hundreds of men of fighting age have been separated from their families and taken to unknown locations. There are also reports of murders, rapes, beatings and theft. The spokesman said it was believed that some of the soldiers committing the atrocities were Serbian paramilitaries commanded by the man known as Arkan, who was wanted by INTERPOL for crimes including murder.

According to another account, all Muslims from the town of Bosanka Novi and neighbouring villages were rounded up at the bus station, where draft age men were separated. They were reportedly held there for five days without food or water being provided.

According to the spokesman, there is also concern at the fate of Serb civilians in Croatia's Krajina. After the area was taken by force by the Croatian Army in August, it was mainly vulnerable elderly people who stayed behind. Some have since been killed, or had their houses robbed and looted. There have been numerous reports of the survivors not being given essential medical treatment or even food.

The situation in Serb-held Sector East is very tense, the spokesman continued. Reports from the Sector say the so-called ARSK, or Serb forces, are continuing to develop defensive positions, which in some cases are restricting access to UN observation posts. There is so far no sign of a build up of Croatian troops in the area.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali Friday met with Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin of Israel who is in New York for the commemorative session. A United Nations spokesman said Mr. Rabin thanked the United Nations for the positive contribution of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), especially in Gaza. The Secretary-General said the United Nations system would continue assistance to Palestinians in Gaza.

Later, Prime Minister Rabin told correspondents, that during the meeting with the Secretary-General, they discussed the situation in the Middle East. He said there would be a continuation of the peace process with the Palestinians with the purpose of establishing the interim phase in which the Palestinians would have self-government.

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Queen Noor of Jordan and Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today formally launched the International Leadership Academy of the United Nations University (UNU). This is the first United Nations-sponsored global institute of its kind to be established in the Middle-East. The occasion marked the initiation of a new UNU human resource development programme aimed at nurturing future leaders.

The ceremony which took place in the Secretary-General's office at Headquarters was attended by Hisashi Owada, Permanent Representative of Japan, Abdul Salam Majali, former Prime Minister of Jordan and Hector Gurgulino de Souza, Rector of the UNU. The Governing Council of the UNU decided to establish the Academy in December 1994. Its seat will be at the University of Jordan in Amman. Jordan has pledged to provide $1 million annually for the activities of the Academy.

The Academy aims to create a network of future leaders who will enhance global cooperation through dialogue and inter-cultural exchange and to study conflict resolution through negotiation, democracy, justice and solidarity.

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The Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management has said the financial situation of the United Nations continued to be still extremely grave. Speaking to the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) on Friday, Under Secretary-General Joseph Connor said a number of Member States had responded positively to the Secretary-General's appeal for payment of assessed contributions.

Since the end of September, additional contributions to the regular

budget amounting to $135 million had been received, including $95 million from the major contributor. This welcome inflow of cash however, was within the amounts anticipated in the cash flow projections for the last quarter of 1995.

Under-Secretary-General Connor said despite the reduction in outstanding contributions to the regular budget, it was still expected that some $240 million would have to be borrowed from peacekeeping operations by year-end to finance the anticipated shortfalls in payments to the regular budget. He said additional payments totalling $228 million had also been received this month for peacekeeping operations. The outstanding amount to that operation is $2.2 billion.

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United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Jose Ayala Lasso and UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor have agreed to intensify cooperation to protect and promote human rights. A Memorandum of Understanding signed in Paris Thursday called for consultation and joint action between UNESCO and the High Commission. It also called for increasing cooperation to defend the rights of authors, journalists, teachers, scientists and others related to UNESCO's field of competence, the development of training programmes on human rights, and the preparations for a world conference in 1997 on the elimination of racism, racial and ethnic discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance.

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The developing countries would like to see an action-oriented Agenda for development which provides the framework for implementing existing international commitments for development. Addressing the Second Committee (Economic and Financial), the representative of the Philippines speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 developing countries and China said the Agenda should also stress the need for increased external resources to finance and support economic growth and development and existing development commitments.

The Group of 77 and China felt restoring economic growth issues to the top of the UN agenda and among others creating greater balance in United Nations consideration of development, vis-a-vis peacekeeping and other activities remained an important objective of the agenda.

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The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) has been told that the capability of developing countries to combat crime had been seriously hampered by the lack of financial resources and technology. The representative of China said the United Nations and the international community needed to promote the provision of financial and technological

assistance in the fight against crime and drugs. The representative of Bangladesh, calling attention to the need for that assistance, said developing countries are particularly vulnerable to becoming sanctuaries for organized and transnational crime.

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The Department of Public Information (DPI) has published a fact sheet: "Setting the Record Straight - Some Facts About the United Nations at 50". The fact sheet says even as the Organization marks its 50th anniversary, its ability to function was hampered by financial problems. It was clear, according to the fact sheet, that this situation stemmed in part from widespread public misunderstandings about what the United Nations really was and did.

The DPI fact sheet depicts 19 interesting but little known facts - most of them in a comparative setting. Among them:

+ The budget for the UN's core functions - the Secretariat operations in New York, Geneva, Nairobi, Vienna and five Regional Commissions - is $1.3 billion a year. This is about 4 per cent of New York City's annual budget and nearly a billion dollars less than the yearly cost of Tokyo's Fire Department.

+ The core functions of the UN require the services of 9,600 people. The Swedish capital of Stockholm, by contrast has 60,000 municipal employees.

+ 60,000 people work in the entire UN system worldwide, which includes the Secretariat and some 30 other organizations such as UNICEF, The World Bank and the IMF. Three times as many people work for McDonald's; Disney World and Disneyland employ 50,000.

+ The United Nations system has the equivalent of less than $1.75 per human being to spend on economic and social development. The world's governments spent about $767 billion in military expenditures in 1994 - the equivalent of $134 per human being.

+ The United States' share of the UN's regular budget is $315 million a year - the equivalent of $1.30 per American. Its contribution to the annual peace-keeping budget is 31% or about $1 billion - less than 0.5 percent of the annual US military budget.

+ For every dollar the US contributes to the New York based United Nations Development Programme, American companies get back $4 in UNDP procurement orders. And the UN, its agencies and the diplomatic and consular corps contribute $3.2 billion a year to the economy of the New York City area alone, according to Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

The fact sheet is DPI publication No. 1753 of October 1995.

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